6220.0 - Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, Sep 2007

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One third of Australia's civilian population is not in the labour force: ABS

A total of 5.5 million Australians (aged 15 years and over) are not in the labour force, according to statistics released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This represented 33% of the civilian population aged 15 years and over.

Of the people not in the labour force in September 2007, most (85% or 4.6 million) did not want work (see media note).

Almost half (48%) of the people not wanting work were 65 years or older, 18% were aged 55–64, and a further 12% were aged 15–24.

Nearly two-thirds (60%) of the people not wanting work were women.

Women who did not want to work most commonly reported that their main activity was 'home duties or caring for children' (39%) and 'retired or voluntarily inactive' (30%). For men, their main activity was 'retired or voluntarily inactive' (45%), had a 'long-term health condition or disability' (18%), or 'attending an educational institution' (17%).

There were 845,000 people not in the labour force who stated that they wanted to work. Of these 8% were actively looking for work, but were not available to start work in the previous week. The remaining 92% were not actively looking, but were available to start work within four weeks.

Of the people who wanted to work, nearly a third (29%) were aged 15–24 and 18% were aged 25–34.

Two-thirds (66%) of the people who wanted to work were women.

Women who wanted to work most commonly reported that their main activity was 'home duties or caring for children' (61%). For men, 'attending an educational institution' (39%) was their main activity when not in the labour force.

Further details can be found in *Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, 2007* (cat. no. 6220.0), available for free download.

Media note:
People not wanting work includes: people who stated that they did not want work, some people who were permanently unable to work, and people who wanted to work but were not looking and not available to start work within four weeks. These people are 'without marginal attachment' to the labour force.

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